

Police officers are starting to use AI chatbots to write crime reports. Will they hold up in court?

By SEAN MURPHY and MATT O'BRIEN

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — A body camera captured every word and bark uttered as police Sgt. Matt Gilmore and his K-9 dog, Gunner, searched for a group of suspects for nearly an hour.

Normally, the Oklahoma City police sergeant would grab his laptop and spend another 30 to 45 minutes writing up a report about the search. But this time he had artificial intelligence write the first draft.

Pulling from all the sounds and radio chatter picked up by the microphone attached to Gilbert's body camera, the AI tool churned out a report in eight seconds.

"It was a better report than I could have ever written, and it was 100% accurate. It flowed better," Gilbert said. It even documented a fact he didn't remember hearing — another officer's mention of the color of the car the suspects ran from.

Due to Mr. Graves driving with a revoked license and without insurance, I informed him that he would be receiving citations for these offenses as well as for speeding, which I reduced to 1-10 over the limit.

While issuing the citations, I experienced a technical issue with my printer. Assistance was requested, and another officer provided a functioning printer.

Mr. Graves was advised to contact the Department of Transportation to obtain a professional license to drive to work.

After the citations were issued, I offered Mr. Graves a courtesy ride to his home, which he accepted.

I acknowledge this report was generated using Draft One by Axon. I further acknowledge that I have reviewed the report for accuracy and believe it to be an accurate representation of the events. If needed, I am willing to testify to

Captain Jason Bussert demonstrates Draft One, an AI powered software that creates police reports from body cam audio, at Oklahoma City police headquarters on Friday, May 31, 2024 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Continued on Page 2

Associated Press



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Police officers are starting to use AI chatbots to write crime reports. Will they hold up in court?

Continued from Front

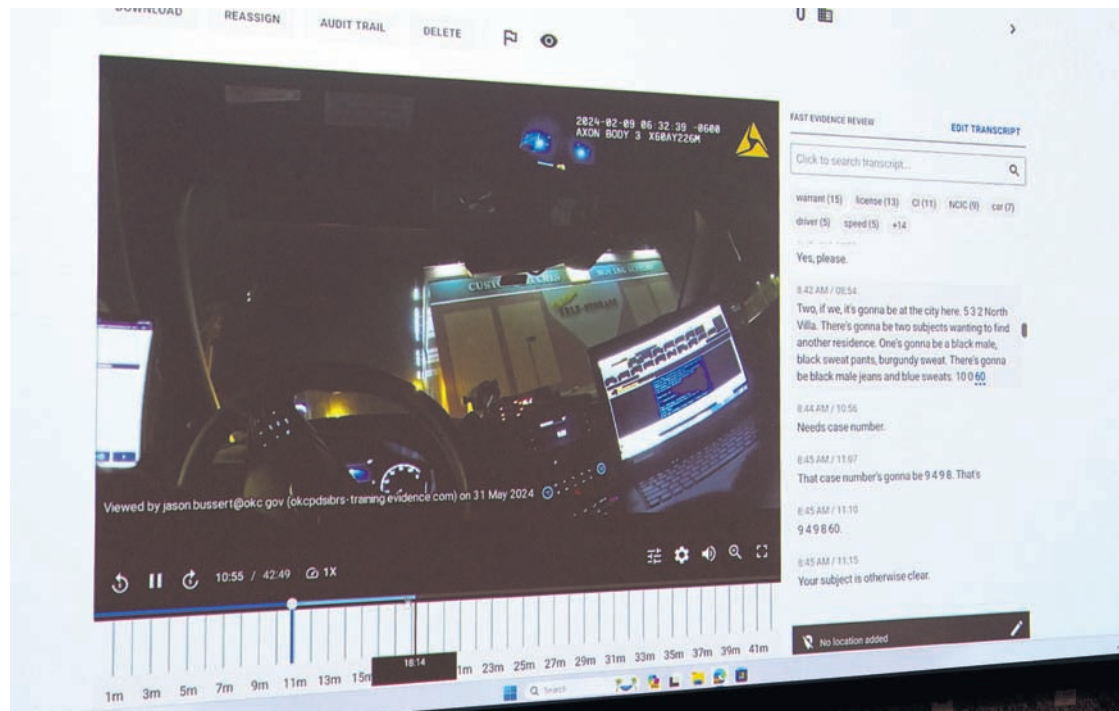
Oklahoma City's police department is one of a handful to experiment with AI chatbots to produce the first drafts of incident reports. Police officers who've tried it are enthused about the time-saving technology, while some prosecutors, police watchdogs and legal scholars have concerns about how it could alter a fundamental document in the criminal justice system that plays a role in who gets prosecuted or imprisoned. Built with the same technology as ChatGPT and sold by Axon, best known for developing the Taser and as the dominant U.S. supplier of body cameras, it could become what Gilbert describes as another "game changer" for police work.

"They become police officers because they want to do police work, and spending half their day doing data entry is just a tedious part of the job that they hate," said Axon's founder and CEO Rick Smith, describing the new AI product — called Draft One — as having the "most positive reaction" of any product the company has introduced.

"Now, there's certainly concerns," Smith added. In particular, he said district attorneys prosecuting a criminal case want to be sure that police officers — not solely an AI chatbot — are responsible for authoring their reports because they may have to testify in court about what they witnessed.

"They never want to get an officer on the stand who says, well, 'The AI wrote that, I didn't,'" Smith said.

AI technology is not new to police agencies, which have adopted algorithmic tools to read license plates, recognize suspects' faces, detect gunshot sounds and predict where crimes might occur. Many of those applications have come with privacy and civil rights concerns and attempts by legislators to set safeguards.



Draft One, an AI powered software that creates police reports from body cam audio, is demonstrated on a screen at Oklahoma City police headquarters on Friday, May 31, 2024 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Associated Press

But the introduction of AI-generated police reports is so new that there are few, if any, guardrails guiding their use.

Concerns about society's racial biases and prejudices getting built into AI technology are just part of what Oklahoma City community activist aurelius francisco finds "deeply troubling" about the new tool, which he learned about from The Associated Press. "The fact that the technology is being used by the same company that provides Tasers to the department is alarming enough," said francisco, a co-founder of the Foundation for Liberating Minds in Oklahoma City.

He said automating those reports will "ease the police's ability to harass, surveil and inflict violence on community members. While making the cop's job easier, it makes Black and brown people's lives harder."

Before trying out the tool in Oklahoma City, police officials showed it to local prosecutors who advised some caution before using it on high-stakes criminal cases. For now, it's only used for minor incident reports that don't lead to someone getting arrested.

"So no arrests, no felonies, no violent crimes," said Oklahoma City police

Capt. Jason Bussert, who handles information technology for the 1,170-officer department.

That's not the case in another city, Lafayette, Indiana, where Police Chief Scott Galloway told the AP that all of his officers can use Draft One on any kind of case and it's been "incredibly popular" since the pilot began earlier this year. Or in Fort Collins, Colorado, where police Sgt. Robert Younger said officers are free to use it on any type of report, though they discovered it doesn't work well on patrols of the city's downtown bar district because of an "overwhelming amount of noise." Along with using AI to analyze and summarize the audio recording, Axon experimented with computer vision to summarize what's "seen" in the video footage, before quickly realizing that the technology was not ready.

"Given all the sensitivities around policing, around race and other identities of people involved, that's an area where I think we're going to have to do some real work before we would introduce it," said Smith, the Axon CEO, describing some of the tested responses as not "overtly racist" but insensitive in other ways.

Those experiments led Axon to focus squarely on audio

in the product unveiled in April during its annual company conference for police officials.

The technology relies on the same generative AI model that powers ChatGPT, made by San Francisco-based OpenAI. OpenAI is a close business partner with Microsoft, which is Axon's cloud computing provider.

"We use the same underlying technology as ChatGPT, but we have access to more knobs and dials than an actual ChatGPT user would have," said Noah Spitzer-Williams, who manages Axon's AI products. Turning down the "creativity dial" helps the model stick to facts so that it "doesn't embellish or hallucinate in the same ways that you would find if you were just using ChatGPT on its own," he said.

Axon won't say how many police departments are using the technology. It's not the only vendor, with startups like Policereports.ai and Truleo pitching similar products. But given Axon's deep relationship with police departments that buy its Tasers and body cameras, experts and police officials expect AI-generated reports to become more ubiquitous in the coming months and years.

Before that happens, legal

scholar Andrew Ferguson would like to see more of a public discussion about the benefits and potential harms. For one thing, the large language models behind AI chatbots are prone to making up false information, a problem known as hallucination that could add convincing and hard-to-notice falsehoods into a police report.

"I am concerned that automation and the ease of the technology would cause police officers to be sort of less careful with their writing," said Ferguson, a law professor at American University working on what's expected to be the first law review article on the emerging technology.

Ferguson said a police report is important in determining whether an officer's suspicion "justifies someone's loss of liberty." It's sometimes the only testimony a judge sees, especially for misdemeanor crimes.

Human-generated police reports also have flaws, Ferguson said, but it's an open question as to which is more reliable.

For some officers who've tried it, it is already changing how they respond to a reported crime. They're narrating what's happening so the camera better captures what they'd want to put in writing.

As the technology catches on, Bussert expects officers will become "more and more verbal" in describing what's in front of them.

After Bussert loaded the video of a traffic stop into the system and pressed a button, the program produced a narrative-style report in conversational language that included dates and times, just like an officer would have typed from his notes, all based on audio from the body camera. "It was literally seconds," Gilmore said, "and it was done to the point where I was like, 'I don't have anything to change.'"

At the end of the report, the officer must click a box that indicates it was generated with the use of AI. □

Venezuelan electoral official asserts 'lack of transparency and veracity' in Maduro's reelection

By JOSHUA GOODMAN

Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — A Venezuelan electoral official has denounced what he calls a "grave lack of transparency and veracity" in last month's election results, rebuking authorities who declared President Nicolás Maduro the winner despite strong evidence to the contrary presented by his opponents and doubts from several foreign governments.

Juan Carlos Delpino is one of five members of the National Electoral Council, or CNE in Spanish, and the only one who prior to the vote had shown a willingness to go against the wishes of Maduro's government.

On Monday, he published a letter on social media detailing several alleged irregularities before and on the day of the July 28 election. He said polling centers were slow to report results from automated voting machines while several opposition volunteers were banished, in violation of electoral rules guaranteeing the transparent transmission of tallies to CNE



Officials from the National Electoral Council (CNE), from left, Acme Nogal, Juan Delpino, Antonio Meneces, Elvis Hidrobo Amoroso, Rosalba Gil, and Carlos Quintero, hold a private meeting at the CNE headquarters in Caracas, Venezuela, Aug. 25, 2023.

Associated Press

headquarters.

Delpino said he was informed that the hours-long delay was caused by a supposed hacking of the CNE platform and that only 58% of results had been collected.

He said he decided in protest not to join his fellow

rectors in monitoring the vote-counting from the CNE data hub or attending the midnight press conference when CNE President Elvis Amoroso, a ruling party loyalist, declared Maduro the winner.

"I deeply regret that the results don't serve the Ven-

ezuelan people, that they don't help resolve our differences or promote national unity but instead fuel doubts in the majority of Venezuelans and the international community," Delpino wrote.

Delpino, an electoral expert close to one of Ven-

ezuela's traditional opposition parties, was named to the CNE by the National Assembly controlled by Maduro's allies last year after several predecessors were removed.

His letter comes as Maduro doubles down on assertions he won reelection by more than 1 million votes. His government has defied calls from the U.S., European Union and even leftist allies from Brazil, Colombia and Mexico to release voting records that would back such claims.

Meanwhile, the opposition has published online what appear to be authentic tallies from 80% of polling machines showing that its candidate, Edmundo González, won by a more than 2-to-1 margin.

Last week, the Venezuelan Supreme Court certified the results and said voting tallies published online by the opposition were forged.

Attorney General Tarek William Saab ordered González to testify this week in a criminal investigation over alleged attempts to spread panic in the South American nation by contesting the results. □

Special counsel urges appeals court to reinstate classified documents case against Trump

By ERIC TUCKER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Special counsel Jack Smith asked a federal appeals court Monday to reinstate the classified documents case against former President Donald Trump after it was dismissed by a judge last month.

U.S. District Judge Aileen Cannon threw out the case, one of four prosecutions of Trump, after concluding that Smith's appointment as special counsel was unconstitutional.

Smith's team then appealed to the Atlanta-based 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, with prosecutors saying in their appeal brief that Cannon's decision is "at odds

with widespread and longstanding appointment practices in the Department of Justice and across the government."

The appeal is the latest development in a prosecution that many legal experts consider a straightforward criminal case but has been derailed by delays, months of hearings before Cannon, a Trump-appointed judge, and ultimately a dismissal order that brought the proceedings to at least a temporary halt.

It's unclear how long it will take for the appeals court to decide the matter, but even if it overturns Cannon's dismissal and revives the prosecution, there's no chance of a trial before the November presiden-

tial election and Trump, if elected, could appoint an attorney general who would dismiss the case.

The case includes dozens of felony charges that Trump illegally retained classified documents from his presidency at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida, and obstructed the government's efforts to get them back. He has pleaded not guilty.

Smith was appointed special counsel in November 2022 by Attorney General Merrick Garland to investigate Trump's handling of the documents as well as his efforts to undo the 2020 presidential election ahead of the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol.

Both investigations resulted

in criminal charges, though the election subversion prosecution faces an uncertain future following a U.S. Supreme Court deci-

sion last month that conferred broad immunity on Trump and narrowed the scope of the case. □



Republican presidential nominee former President Donald Trump walks on stage to speak at the National Guard Association of the United States' 146th General Conference, Monday, Aug. 26, 2024, in Detroit.

Associated Press

Heat waves, wildfires and now ... snow? California endures a summer of extremes

By JOHN ANTCHAK and
SOPHIE AUSTIN

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) —

An unusually cold weather system from the Gulf of Alaska interrupted summer along the West Coast on Saturday, bringing snow to mountains in California and the Pacific Northwest and prompting the closure of part of a highway that runs through a national park.

Parts of Highway 89 through Lassen Volcanic National Park in California were shut down after an estimated 3 inches (7.6 centimeters) of snow fell overnight, according to the National Weather Service.

Photos posted by the agency and local authorities showed a high-elevation blanket of white on Mount Rainier in Washington along with a dusting of snow at Minaret Vista, a lookout point southeast of Yosemite National Park in California's Sierra Nevada.

Madera County Deputy Sheriff Larry Rich said it was "definitely unexpected" to see snow at Minaret Vista in August.

"It's not every day you get to spend your birthday surrounded by a winter won-



A coating of snow is seen below ski lifts at Sugarbowl Ski Resort Saturday, Aug. 24, 2024, in Donner Summit, Calif.

derland in the middle of summer," he said in a statement. "It made for a day I won't soon forget, and a unique reminder of why I love serving in this area. It's just one of those moments that makes working up here so special."

In northern Nevada, rain fell in the runup to the annual Burning Man festival, prompting organizers to close the entrance gate

for most of Saturday before reopening. Torrential rains upended last year's festival, turning the celebration and its temporary city into a muddy quagmire.

It also snowed overnight on Mammoth Mountain, a ski destination in California, with the National Weather Service warning hikers and campers to prepare for slick roads.

Record rainfall moved

through Redding, Red Bluff and Stockton in Northern California on Saturday, the weather service said, and rain showers south of Lake Oroville were expected to continue into the evening. A dusting of snow fell overnight on the crest of the Sierra Nevada around Tioga Pass, the weather service said.

August snow has not occurred there since 2003,

forecasters said.

Tioga Pass rises to more than 9,900 feet (3,017 meters) and serves as the eastern entryway to Yosemite. But it is usually closed much of each year by winter snow that can take one or two months to clear.

While the start of ski season is at least several months away, the hint of winter was welcomed by resorts.

"It's a cool and blustery August day here at Palisades Tahoe, as a storm that could bring our first snowfall of the season moves in this afternoon!" the resort said in a social media post Friday.

The "anomalous cool conditions" will spread over much of the western U.S. by Sunday morning, according to the National Weather Service's Weather Prediction Center in College Park, Maryland.

Despite the expected precipitation, forecasters also warned of fire danger because of gusty winds associated with the passage of the cold front.

At the same time, a flash flood watch was issued for the burn scar of California's largest wildfire so far this year from Friday morning through Saturday morning. □

Death of woman on 1st day of Burning Man festival under investigation

By SCOTT SONNER

Associated Press

RENO, Nev. (AP) — Authori-

ties said Monday that they are investigating the death of a woman at the coun-

terculture festival known as Burning Man, which is held annually in the northern Nevada desert.

The Pershing County Sheriff's Office said emergency personnel responded to a call about a woman found unresponsive around noon Sunday in Black Rock City a temporary city erected for the festival, about 100 miles (160 kilometers) north of Reno.

The Burning Man Project's emergency services personnel were unsuccessful in attempted life-saving measures on the woman.

"Our thoughts and condolences go out to the family and friends affected by this loss," festival organizers said in a statement. "We

are cooperating fully with local authorities as they investigate this incident."

About a half-dozen other deaths have been reported at the festival since it moved from Baker Beach in San Francisco to the Black Rock desert in 1990. Last year, a 32-year-old California man died from suspected drug intoxication after being found unresponsive on the festival grounds.

Pershing County Sheriff Jerry Allen said in a statement that Sunday's death will remain under investigation until a cause and manner can be determined, which will be updated at the conclusion of an autopsy.

A call to the Washoe County Regional Medical Exam-

iner's Office wasn't immediately returned Monday.

Allen said the woman's name and age won't be released until her relatives can be notified.

The festival, which combines wilderness camping with a weeklong celebration of art for art's sake, kicked off early Sunday after the gates had been closed for 12 hours following rain and muddy conditions.

An estimated 20,000 people were already on the playa before the gates officially opened to all ticket-holders.

Burning Man runs through Sept. 2. Organizers expect more than 70,000 people to attend this year's event. □



This image released by Maxar Technologies shows an overview of the Burning Man 2024 festival, Sunday, Aug. 25, 2024, in Black Rock City, Nev.

Associated Press

Russia's deadly overnight barrage of missiles and drones hits over half of Ukraine, officials say

By ILLIA NOVIKOV

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia battered much of Ukraine on Monday, firing scores of missiles and drones that killed four people, injured more than a dozen and damaged energy facilities in attacks that President Volodymyr Zelensky described as "vile."

The barrage of over 100 missiles and a similar number of drones began around midnight and continued through daybreak in what appeared to be Russia's biggest onslaught in weeks. Ukraine's air force said swarms of Russian drones fired at eastern, northern, southern, and central regions were followed by volleys of cruise and ballistic missiles.

"Like most previous Russian strikes, this one was just as vile, targeting critical civilian infrastructure," Zelenskyy said, adding that most of the country was targeted from the Kharkiv region and Kyiv to Odesa and the west.

Explosions were heard in the capital of Kyiv. Power and water supplies in the city were disrupted by the attack, Mayor Vitali Klitschko said.



On this photo taken from video released by the Russian Defense Ministry on Monday, Aug. 26, 2024, A Russian assault unit prepare to leave an armoured personal carrier in the direction of Konstantinovka in Ukraine.

Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal said Russia fired drones, cruise missiles and hypersonic ballistic Kinzhal missiles at 15 Ukrainian regions more than half the country. "The energy infrastructure has once again become the target of Russian terrorists," Shmyhal said, adding that the state-owned power grid operator, Ukrenergo, has been forced to implement emergency power cuts to stabilize the system. He urged Ukraine's allies to provide it with long-range

weapons and permission to use them on targets inside Russia.

"In order to stop the barbaric shelling of Ukrainian cities, it is necessary to destroy the place from which the Russian missiles are launched," Shmyhal said. "We count on the support of our allies and will definitely make Russia pay."

The Russian Defense Ministry said the attacks used "long-range precision air and sea-based weapons and strike drones against

critical energy infrastructure facilities that support the operation of Ukraine's military-industrial complex. All designated targets were hit." At least four people were killed one in the western city of Lutsk, one in the central Dnipropetrovsk region, one in Zhytomyr in the country's center, and one in the partially occupied Zaporizhzhia region in the southeast, local officials said. Thirteen others were wounded one in the Kyiv region that surrounds the

capital, five in Lutsk, three in the southern Mykolaiv region and four in the neighboring Odesa region.

Blackouts and damage to civilian infrastructure and residential buildings were reported from the region of Sumy in the east, to the Mykolaiv and Odesa regions in the south, to the region of Rivne in the west. In Sumy, a province in the east that borders Russia, local administration said that 194 settlements lost power, while 19 others had a partial blackout.

The private energy company DTEK introduced emergency blackouts, saying in a statement that "energy workers throughout the country work 24/7 to restore light in the homes of Ukrainians."

In the wake of the barrage and the power cuts, officials across Ukraine were ordered to open "points of invincibility" shelter-type places where people can charge their phones and other devices and get refreshments during blackouts, Shmyhal said. Such points were first opened in the fall of 2022, when Russia targeted Ukraine's energy infrastructure with weekly barrages. □

Associated Press

Police in Iceland call off search at ice cave collapse that killed 1 man, saying no one is missing

By DAVID KEYTON and DANICA KIRKA

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Icelandic police on Monday called off the search for anyone trapped in the previous day's collapse of an ice cave that killed one person and injured another, saying that all members of the tourist expedition had been accounted for.

Authorities had initially mounted a large-scale rescue operation, with as many as 200 rescuers sifting through the icy rubble by hand to find two people believed to have been missing.

But police eventually determined that no one was un-

accounted for after examining the tour operator's records and finding that only 23 people were on the ice cave tour, not 25 as was first believed. Even so, rescuers continued the search until all of the collapsed ice had been moved to be sure that no one had been left behind.

"The police field manager located at the scene announced that all the ice that was thought to have fallen on the people had been moved," police said. "It has come to light that no one (was) hidden under the ice."

The rescue operation began around 3 p.m. local time on Sunday when au-

thorities received reports that an ice cave had collapsed at the Breydamerkurjokull glacier in southeastern Iceland. One man died at the scene and a woman was transported to a hospital in Reykjavik, the capital, by helicopter. Both victims are American citizens, police said.

The search, which was suspended overnight when conditions made it too dangerous, had resumed at about 7 a.m., Icelandic broadcaster RUV reported. Video showed rescuers working inside two large craters surrounded by the sand-blackened ice of the Breydamerkurjokull glacier. But by the end of the day,

they were satisfied that no one else was missing. Police said there had been "mis-

leading information" about the number of people on the trip. □



Rescue teams at the scene after an ice cave partially collapsed, at the Breydamerkurjokull glacier, in southeastern Iceland, Monday, Aug. 26, 2024.

Associated Press

Gunmen kill dozens in multiple attacks in one of the deadliest days in a Pakistani province

By ABDUL SATTAR and
MUNIR AHMED

Associated Press

QUETTA, Pakistan (AP) — Gunmen in southwestern Pakistan killed at least 38 people in three separate attacks on Monday, officials said, while the military said security forces killed 21 insurgents, marking one of the deadliest days of violence in the restive Baluchistan province, with reports of other shootings and destruction in the area as well. Twenty-three people were fatally shot overnight after being taken from buses, vehicles and trucks in Musakhail, a district in Baluchistan, senior police official Ayub Achakzai said. The attackers burned at least 10 vehicles before fleeing. In a separate attack, gunmen killed at least nine people, including four police officers and five passersby, in Baluchistan's Qalat district, authorities said. The bodies of six people were found in Bolan, where insurgents also blew up a railway track. They also attacked a police station in Mastung and attacked and burned vehicles in Gwadar, all districts in Baluchistan. No casualties were reported in those attacks. The military said 14 secu-



People look at a burnt vehicle which was torched by gunmen after they killed passengers at a highway in Musakhail, a district in Baluchistan province in restive southwestern Pakistan, Monday, Aug. 26, 2024.

Associated Press

rity forces were "martyred" while responding to the attacks. Those appeared to be included in the overall death toll.

"Sanitization operations are being conducted and the instigators, perpetrators, facilitators and abettors of these heinous and cowardly acts, targeting innocent civilians, will be brought to justice," the military said in a statement.

Sarfraz Bugti, the chief minister in Baluchistan, told reporters in Quetta that operations against the insurgents are underway, and "those

who killed our innocent civilians and security with be dealt with a full force."

Baluchistan has been the scene of a long-running insurgency in Pakistan, with an array of separatist groups staging attacks, mainly on security forces. The separatists have been demanding independence from the central government in Islamabad. Although Pakistani authorities say they have quelled the insurgency, violence in Baluchistan has persisted.

The attack in Musakhail came hours after the out-

lawed Baluch Liberation Army separatist group warned people to stay away from highways as they launched attacks on security forces in various parts of the province.

But there there was no immediate claim of responsibility for the latest killings.

In a statement on Monday, the BLA only said it inflicted heavy losses on security forces in attacks in the province. Pakistan's military and government did not immediately comment on that claim. The group often provides exaggerated figures

of troop casualties.

It said one female suicide bomber also took part in the attack on security forces.

Separatists are known to ask people for their ID cards, and then abduct or kill those who are from outside the province. Many recent victims have come from neighboring Punjab province.

Uzma Bukhari, a spokesperson for the Punjab provincial government, denounced the latest killings, saying the "attacks are a matter of grave concern" and urging the Baluchistan government to "step up efforts to eliminate BLA terrorists."

Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi in separate statements called the attack in Musakhail "barbaric" and vowed that those behind it would not escape justice.

In May, gunmen fatally shot seven barbers in Gwadar, a port city in Baluchistan.

In April, separatists killed nine people after abducting them from a bus on a highway in Baluchistan. They also killed two people and wounded six in another car they forced to stop. The BLA claimed responsibility for those attacks. □

WHO launches plan to stanch mpox transmission and says the virus can be stopped

GENEVA (AP) — The U.N. health agency on Monday launched a six-month plan to help stanch outbreaks of



Red Cross officials create awareness around mpox in the Don Bosco refugee camp in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo, Thursday, Aug. 22, 2023.

Associated Press

mpox transmission, including ramping up staffing in affected countries and boosting surveillance, prevention and response strategies.

The World Health Organization said it expects the plan from September through February next year will require \$135 million in funding and aims to improve fair access to vaccines, notably in African countries hardest hit by the outbreak. "The mpox outbreaks in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and neighboring countries can be controlled, and can be stopped," said WHO Director-General Tedros Ad-

hanom Ghebreyesus in a statement.

The agency is "significantly scaling up staff" in affected countries, it said. In mid-August, WHO classified the current mpox outbreak as a global health emergency.

Also Monday, German government spokesperson Steffen Hebestreit said Germany is donating 100,000 doses of mpox vaccine to affected countries from stocks held by its military, German news agency dpa reported.

Last Tuesday, Congo the hardest-hit country reported more than 1,000 new mpox cases over the previ-

ous week.

In its latest update on the outbreak, the African Centers for Disease Control reported that as of Thursday, more than 21,300 suspected or confirmed cases and 590 deaths have been reported this year in 12 African countries.

Mpox belongs to the same family of viruses as smallpox but typically causes milder symptoms like fever, chills and body aches. It mostly spreads through close skin-to-skin contact, including sexual intercourse. People with more serious cases can develop lesions on the face, hands, chest and genitals. □

Did you know about...

Basic driving rules on Aruba (part 1)

(Oranjestad)—Have you ever felt confused when you're driving on the highways or backstreets of Aruba? Then we present a simple guide to some of the basic rules of Aruban traffic, along with some tips for things to look out for.

Speed limit

Legally, the speed limit on the four-lane highways is 80 km/h. This speed limit also counts for the main roads that are connected to the highways. The minimum speed is 50 km/h. Most people drive around 60 km/h on the main roads and about 70 km/h on the highways. There are also areas that indicate a speed limit on a sign; these are usually around populated and school areas.

The four-lane highways contain the left-lane, also known as the "fast" lane for each direction. Here is where vehicles can drive up to the maximum speed. However, legally it is not permitted to drive for long periods of time on the left lane. This lane is primarily designed for drivers to switch lanes before a roundabout, for example, if your exit on the roundabout is on your far left. The general lane to drive in—both at maximum and minimum speed—is on the right lane.

Roundabouts

Speaking of roundabouts, it is important to know where



you have to enter and drive on the roundabout to make your exit. A good rule of thumb is to count the exits starting from your right side. So, exit 1 would be on your right; exit 2 would be straight ahead; exit 3 would be on your far left and exit 4 would lead to the road paralleled to the one you're on, heading in the other direction.

Most roundabouts have these 4 exits, so they are relatively simple. When you're driving on the four-lane highway, it is important to know when to switch to the left lane to make your exit: if your exit is on your far

left (exit 3), then you need to switch to the left lane on the high way before nearing the roundabout so you can take the path that leads you directly to your exit. If your exit is on your right or if you're going straight ahead, you can keep driving in the right lane of the highway.

It's also important to know that vehicles about to enter the roundabout must yield to those already on it. A good rule of thumb is to look out if someone is coming from your left side.

However, other roundabouts can be quite tricky

to navigate...

Watty Vos Boulevard (the "paperclip" roundabout)

Probably the biggest roundabout on the island, the "paperclip" roundabout on the Watty Vos Boulevard is one of the trickier roundabouts that could—and has—caused confused among both tourists and locals. However, once you take a good look at it, it's fairly simple. The basis is just the same as a regular roundabout (left exit? left lane! etc.), but instead of having four different exits like on a regular roundabout, now you have two extra; one on the right and the other on the left side of the roundabout. The rules don't change at all, you just have to keep an extra eye open.

Airport roundabout

Ah, yes. The infamous airport roundabout. The favorite roundabout amongst local, because of its easy (hard) lanes that never (always) cause confusion among drivers. Sarcasm aside, this roundabout can be tricky to enter, especially when you're driving from the direction of the airport heading. When you're driving away from the airport reaching the roundabout,

you'll be faced with three lanes. The far right lane is to take the exit 1 out heading east (right lane of highway). The middle exit is used for exit 1 (left lane of highway), 2 and 3. The far left exit is used to only exit on exit 3 (left lane of highway) and 4.

"Las Americas" roundabout

The Las Americas roundabout is located near the Talk of the Town hotel, west from the airport roundabout. This roundabout may look like a regular roundabout—and for the most part, it is. However, when you are driving from the east going in the direction of town, please take note that there are two exits on your right.

When you're driving towards this roundabout, you'll notice that the road becomes wider, splitting into two lanes. The right lane is used to take the first and second exit on the right. If you want to exit straight ahead, you must drive on the left lane!

It's always scary to drive in new places where the traffic may look and work differently, but once you get it right once, you'll get the hang of it in no time. □







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Alto Vista chapel and its link to Aruba's origins

According to Etnia Nativa, in the 18th century most of the inhabitants of Aruba were indigenous who lived on the north coast, one of the largest communities lived in Alto Vista.

As they were very religious, they had a chief with the name of Antonio Silvester who guided them in the Christian life and it was he who decided to build a stone chapel with a roof of corn rods, which would

serve as a place of prayer. In 1750 it was blessed by Father Algemesi who came from Coro-Venezuela and appointed Domingo Antonio Silvester as the island's first prosecutor in the name of the Spanish crown and Rome. In 1752 the prosecution passed into the hands of Antonio Silvester's son-in-law, Miguel Álvarez, who continued to guide the parishioners in their prayers.

According to the book,

The History of Alto Vista by R.H. Nooyen, it is not known when Domingo Antonio Silvester came to Aruba from Venezuela. The elders believe Antonio was a Spaniard. In 1780, father Joseph Antonio de la Vegal called Bernardino Silvester, one of Antonio's sons with his wife Anna Cathalina Tromp, "neighbors and naturals of the island Aruba" and thus they became natives.

At the end of the eighteen

century many inhabitants the island died as a result of the black fever epidemic and since people believed that the Alto Vista area was the most infected, they began to build their homes further south within the Noord area, so the town of Noord began to grow into a community till getting its own Church. However religious festivals continued to be celebrated at this sacred native place, with the custom of arriving in procession to Alto Vista.

Two-hundred years after the beautiful time of Alto Vista, people can no longer see much of the town of Alto Vista from 1750. With a lot of work they found the old foundations of the Church of the Queen of the Holiest Rosary to build a new chapel on the same place. The entire surrounding area was empty and desolated, making it hard to imagine that Alto Vista was a town at all. A hundred years later, people can see the remains of around twenty houses, some made of stone and others of clay. Nowadays, only around six of these houses remain.

South of the chapel in the yard two graves can be observed, there was the cemetery which father Pablo de Algemesi blessed.



It is not certain, but it is believed that the two graves belong to Antonio Silvester and Miguel Alvares, according to Nooyen. About 50 meters near the chapel there are still the markings of an old house, where Antonio and Bernardino Silvester would have lived. About 200 meters from the chapel there is a water tank which the locals call Tanki Cacique. In the past this tank was closed. But mostly water was brought out from the Poz di Noord, a well dug in the sand.

The chapel can be viewed from basically any point in the north side, even from Paradera and Sero Plat. All the historical remains around the chapel provide us with an idea on how the old people of Alto Vista used to live. Don't miss the opportunity to visit a place of historical significance with a window to Aruba's past.

Experience Aruban culture with this exciting theme night featuring a Carnival show, mixology bar, local artists and more. You can sample Aruban cuisine, including delicious BBQ options with a tropical twist. A local brass band will be performing, and you can pose with elaborately dressed Carnival dancers for a memorable photo op as well, so don't miss it.

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Craving a late-night snack? We got you covered!

(Oranjestad)—After a night out it's custom to grab yourself a late-night snack on the road. Here in Aruba, there are dozens of food trucks that you can visit to enjoy a late-night bite. Here are a few that can be found in the down town/hotel area.

Chalo burger

Chalo burger is a favorite among locals, and it's due to its popularity that it has branched out to different parts on the island. One of its main locations is in Palm Beach, near the hotel area. Chalo offers a variety of fast-food meals, like hamburgers, hotdogs, loaded fries and more! A popular dish among locals is the Salchipapa: loaded fries with sausages, cheese and a mix of sweet and savory sauce. Perfect for



those late-night cravings!

Chalo is open Wednesdays through Mondays from 7pm to 12 am (Fridays till 1am), and is located at Palm Beach 178 (a little past the roundabout near the Piazza Gianni's). Other Locations include Tanki Leendert and Savaneta.

Julio's Corner

Situated in a nice little corner off the highway, Julio's

Corner has a huge menu comprised of different dishes and snacks, all made with a Venezuelan twist! From arepa's to chicken wings, to pizzas and burgers, Julio's Corner has it all to satisfy your taste! Editor's choice for what to get at Julio's Corner is the quesadilla, which comes with a side of fries.

Julio's Corner is open Mondays through Saturday from 6pm to 2am (Fridays



nese food truck stand, one of very few food trucks on the island to sell Mediterranean food. Located right at the entrance of The Local Market near the cruise ship port, here you can fill. □



and Saturdays up to 4am), and is located in the parking lot of the Eagle Bowling Palace, right on the other side of the road from the Sasaki gas station.

Habibi Express

Habibi Express is a Leba-



Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Playa Linda Beach Resort!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Emerald Ambassadors of Aruba. The honorees were respectively honored with a certificate for their years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honorary certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three levels of honor are as follows:

Distinguished	Visitor
(10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)	
Goodwill	Ambassador
(20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)	
Emerald	Ambassador
(35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)	

The honorees were:

Emerald Ambassadors
Mr. Edgardo & Mrs. Vilma Villegas from Mar del Plata Buenos Aires, Argentina.



Mr. Jorgino Willems representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of Playa Linda Beach Resort bestowed the certificate upon the honorees, presented them

with gifts, and thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination, as their home away from home.

The top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the

honorees were:

- Aruba's people.
- Aruba's beaches, weather and sun.
- Aruba's restaurants.
- "The good treatment we receive from the locals"
- "Good Nautical tours"

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island". □

Sun catchers: The different lizards in Aruba

ORANJESTAD – Colorful or camouflaged, you're bound to encounter a variety of lizards basking in the sun or scurrying on their way in our island. From the charming, friendly iguanas to the good-luck gecko Pega-Pega, you're bound to meet a few of these special residents during your visit.

Aruba, as a desert island, is home to an incredible variety of unique and colorful species. Among them we can find different lizards, most of which have South American origins. But there are a few exceptions.

Iguanas



Iguanas are easy to spot, as they are larger than most other lizards and when young, have a bright green color that makes them stand out.

The iguanas usually found in Aruba are the Iguana iguana, known as the green iguana, or locally as Yuwana. The Yuwana are a mostly herbivorous species, and can grow up to 2 meters in size, including the tail, making them one of the largest in the iguana family. As you will see, despite their name, as they reach adulthood, the iguanas can take on a grey or blue tone instead of the bright green displayed by the young ones. In Aruba – as in the rest of the Kingdom of the Netherlands – the most usual color varies from green to lavender, black and sometimes a reddish brown.

Yuwana is a protected species, as it is listed under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), meaning that international trade is regulated through the CITES permit system. In the past, Arubans used to eat a popular Yuwana soup, as it was believed to give strength and help restore health – probably due to the protein boost it delivered. However, it is now illegal to catch, kill, buy or sell Yuwanas in Aruba, and this includes eating them!

Turnip-tailed gecko



The turnip-tailed gecko is known locally as the Pega-Pega, meaning sticky-sticky, due to the way it sticks to walls using the suction in its little fingers. They are found inside houses, and are mostly a nocturnal animal.

According to Etnia Nativa, the local Pega Pega is immediately recognizable by its large size, with a body length of up to 12 cm, and its large, swollen tail, approximately the same length or slightly shorter than its body; females are larger and more robust than males. It has short, robust legs with flattened toes and extensive basal webbing.

The undersides of its toes are covered in lamellae, which are used as friction pads to cling to smooth vertical surfaces. Some can even walk around completely upside down. Its toes are covered with ridges, which are peppered with millions of microscopic bristle-like structures called setae that attach and detach when the animal wills them to, and they never get gunked up.

They are variable in coloration, from a mottled dark gray to orange-brown, and are capable of changing color depending on their mood and surroundings. Mottled and banded markings aid in camouflage against tree bark. They are harmless and fragile; you can hold one in your hands as long as you are VERY gentle. Never put pressure on its tail because it will surely drop as a measure to try to distract the predator, and they are different from other lizards because they're long-lived, talkative, lack eyelids, and their small scales are situated next to each other like cobblestones rather than overlapping as is the case in most other lizards.

Turnip-tailed Geckos are insectivorous and feed on cockroaches, grasshoppers, beetles, flies, mosquitoes, and spiders, which makes them the best pest control to have at home! They spend their days concealed in dark tree grooves and cavities, in narrow crevices in the walls, or behind paintings, which provide the perfect shelter for them. Pega pega is a gecko endemic to our island, but in time, some 4–5 intrusive gecko species have been observed, some of which do not cease to amaze us with the racket they make, especially during the hours of the night.

The Pega-pega *Phyllodactylus Julieni* is also a protected species in Aruba, by law. It is illegal to kill them!

Blue Kododo

These are one of the most striking lizards in Aruba, recognizable by the male's bright blue color. The Aruban whiptail lizard, *Cnemidophorus arubensis*, is a species endemic to Aruba,



meaning you can only find it here on our One Happy Island! They are also recognized as the most common and populous lizard on the island. While the male is blue with white dots, the female is brown with blue dots.

These charming lizards eat mostly plants, such as flowers, nectar, leaves and fruits, and occasionally enjoy some insects. They are selective in which plants they eat, because of the toxins present in many available plants species. The Kododo help take care of Aruba's vegetation by playing a significant role in the dispersal of seeds for certain plants: when they eat fruit, they excrete the seeds in diverse locations, contributing to the reproduction cycle of our local plants.

Striped anole

The striped anole (*Anolis lineatus*) that lives in Aruba is known locally as Waltaka or Toteki. This is a species of lizard in the family Dactyloidae, and they are native to Aruba and Curaçao. It is usually found in dry areas, commonly where there are not large trees; rather they enjoy rocks, walls or tree trunks, as they prefer to stay close to the ground.

These lizards are about 7cm in length, have a brown color with a stripe on each side and typically, several stripes on the body and tail that are lighter in color. It has a dewlap which is orange-yellow – and what's unique about this species is that it is the only known species of anole where the dewlap is asymmetrically colored, with one side being a deeper orange and the other side a lighter yellow. Mostly this is seen in the males, as it is almost imperceptible in the females. If the Toteki shows you his dewlap, retreat! This is not a friendly greeting!

Lizards are wonderful creatures that are precious to our fragile, local ecosystem. Please be mindful of these residents as you enjoy your stay.

Images: Some images are from Aruba Birdlife Conservation.



The legend of the Kibrahacha tree

(Oranjestad)—The Kibrahacha is a famous tree known locally for its bright, yellow flowers that blooms for just three days. Scientifically known as *Tabebuia billbergii*, and in English as the Yellow Poui, this tree is native to the Caribbean islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao, and is considered among locals as one of the most spectacular trees on the island. But did you also know that the beautiful yellow flowers have a story behind them?

The Kibrahacha is said to have extremely hard wood—so hard that it can break an axe. In fact, that's what its name means in Papiamentu: "kibra" (break) "hacha" (axe). The flowers bloom around April and May, but this only last for about three days, as the flowers start to fall off and the tree starts growing its green leaves. The Kibrahacha is especially particular, as it's the only one among its neighboring trees to start blooming first.

The legend of the Kibrahacha
Written by Hubert (Lio Booi)

One day Aterima, who lived west of the hill Sero Warawara, woke up one day to find her father sleeping in his hammock, suffering a bout of terrible fever. Her mother was very worried, and as was the custom in the olden days, asked Aterima to go fetch Kudaweche, who was an epistemophile, to come see his father.

Aterima wasted to time and went to go fetch Kudaweche. Upon telling Kudaweche that her father was sick, he immediately accompanied Aterima back to her hut, where he encountered her father in a bad state. Not willing to waste any time, he told Aterima that the only thing that can cure her father is a home-made potion made out of the Kibrahacha flower. At the time the Kibrahacha was not yet in her blooming season, but the stubborn Kudaweche was determined to bring back Aterima's father back to health, and so off they went to the nearest Kibrahacha tree.

When they arrived at the tree,

they saw that it was covered head to toe in thorns, with only a few closed flowers at the very top. Kudaweche, experienced veteran in all things Aruban flora and fauna, told Aterima to start plucking the thorns of the tree to climb to the top where the flowers are. Aterima, just as determined to save her father, didn't hesitate to start.

To her surprise, every time she plucked a thorn of the tree, a bright, yellow flower bloomed in its place. The thorns were hard to pluck out, but Aterima continued plucking with enthusiasm and wonder at the unfolding sight before her. Not too long after she was able to fill her entire satchel with the yellow flowers. Kudaweche, satisfied to see Aterima so happy and encouraged to help her father, took her back to her hut.

Upon arriving back at the hut, Aterima's mother quickly made a tea out of the flowers and gave it to her sick husband. Miraculously, after just one sip of the tea, the



father's fever left his body immediately, and he opened eyes and sprung up feeling new.

The next morning, they all visited the same Kibrahacha tree that saved the life of Aterima's father and they saw another miracle. The tree was covered again in the same bright, yellow flowers, with not a thorn in sight. And as the legend goes, from that day on, the Kibrahacha tree no longer produced any more thorns. □

Meet our Aruban trailblazers: Padu Lampe

(Oranjestad)—This week we remember one of our most beloved Aruban giant, Juan Chabaya Lampe—better known as Padu Lampe or Padu del Caribe. As one of the most important and renowned artists in the Aruban cultural sphere, Padu's long career led him to be honored today as "the father of culture."

On April 26th, 1920, Juan Chabaya Lampe "Padu Lampe/Padu del Caribe" was born in Nassaustraat, Oranjestad. He grew up in a happy musical environment, and it is because of this that he developed a



love for music. Starting from the age of 12, he was agile in the clarinet, mandolin and cuatro. Henry Lampe, his father, was also a well-known pianist and musician. In a publication of the informative seminar, "Observer", from August 1st, 1962, Padu's many merits and friendly personality stood out. It was said that he was an excellent pianist with a personal style and full of surprises. Secondly, though the composer was not too familiar with music theory, he showed innovations in his compositions. Lastly, Padu was a promoter of Creole music around the world. One of the most important moments in Aruban history, in which he was able to witness first-hand, was the first radio broadcast on the island on March 20th, 1954. Here, he was accompanied by Antillean guitarist Julian Coco and Hubert "Lio" Booi.

In the art world, Padu was also a known painter. During his youth, he made several paintings using his unique style. In 1939, he participated in an art exhibit in



New York, where he won a bronze medal for his painting "Typical View of Aruba." Padu remained a popular artist within the Dutch Antilles and the Caribbean as a pianist, singer, author and painter. Padu Lampe was a local artist who became renowned in Venezuela, Colombia, The U.S. and The Netherlands too. In the 1950s, he sold no less than 50 thousand copies of his long-playing albums (LPs). Padu Lampe was a multifaceted artist, inspired by his interest in parapsychology and supernatural phenomenon. He wrote three books in Papiamentu on the subject in 1986, which was published by the Aruban National Printing Press with sponsorship provided by the Prince Bernhard Funds



Netherlands Antilles. Besides that, Padu passed his exam on "Society to Advanced Ethical Hypnosis" in 1964 in New Jersey. He received a certificate as a hypnotechnician, which gave him the authority to practice hypnosis in some states. Over the course of his career, he received many accolades and awards in Aruba, Curaçao, Venezuela and the Netherlands. Padu del Caribe passed away on November 29th, 2019, at the age of 99 years old. Padu brought the Aruban culture around the world. His legacy will remain ingrained in the Aruban cultural history, and he will be known forever as one of the most influential trailblazers

of our community. Padu will always be in Aruba's heart, because he had composed various special songs dedicated to the mothers of the island; his song "Sonrisa di un baby" ("A baby's Smile") has been written in three different languages. Padu also wrote our national anthem "Aruba Dushi Tera", along with Mr. Rufo Wever. This song was approved by the government of Aruba and was named the official anthem of the island in 1976. Other songs that have been considered as being almost a second anthem for Arubans is the special composition he wrote for his wife Daisy Croes called "Abo so". Daisy later passed away in 1994. □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Grounds wood
6 Light lunch
11 In the know
12 Baghdad native
13 City visit, of sorts
15 Old soap base
16 Buddhism branch
17 Plopped down
18 Potpourri bit
20 Louvre locale
23 Barn areas
27 Pinnacle
28 Make roads
29 Oman neighbor
31 Not wordy
32 Bolivia's largest city
34 Hoopla
37 Com-motion
38 Young fellow
41 Repeated gag on a show
44 Acquire
45 Enter a password, say
46 Particu-lars, in slang

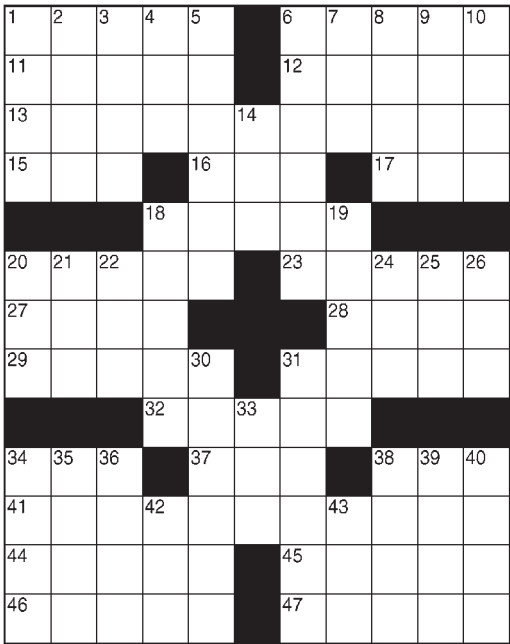
DOWN

- 1 Cry like a baby
2 Not at home
3 Store come-on
4 Tick off
5 Grabs
6 Wave or wink
7 Gallery fill
8 Vietnam neighbor
9 Blue hue
10 Tabloid fodder
14 Volleyball need
18 Screen dot
19 Enter-tainer Jennifer



Yesterday's answer

- 20 Fork over
21 Kong, for one
22 Sleep state
24 Distant
25 Appliance store
26 Spot array
30 Low points
31 Snarl
33 Tailor's aid
34 Like a desert
35 Desert sight
36 Formerly
38 Company symbol
39 Related
40 Say it isn't so
42 Pistachio or pecan
43 Chore



6-4

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

6-4

CRYPTOQUOTE

VSPAP UG DJ GKYS VSUDL CG

HCO FPCVSPA, JDIT

KDGKUVCHIP YIJVSUDL.

— CIMAPO FCUDFAULSV

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: I SING OF BROOKS, OF BLOSSOMS, BIRDS, AND BOWERS. OF APRIL, MAY, OR JUNE, AND JULY FLOWERS. — ROBERT HERRICK

Cruise ship Schedule: August 27 2024

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
WED	27	CELEBRITY BEYOND	08.00	21.00	C	1

Cruise ship Schedule: September 03 - 24 2024

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
TUE	03	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS	08.00	20.00	B	1
		CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	22.00	C	1
WED	04	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	09.00	21.00	C	1
TUE	10	CELEBRITY BEYOND	08.00	21.00	B	1
		CARNIVAL CELEBRATION	08.00	22.00	C	1
		CARNIVAL VISTA	13.00	23.00	I	1
TUE	17	CARNIVAL HORIZON	08.00	22.00	C	1
TUE	24	CELEBRITY BEYOND	08.00	21.00	B	1
		CARNIVAL MAGIC	09.00	22.00	C	1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basicbut important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

lets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Supermarket hours

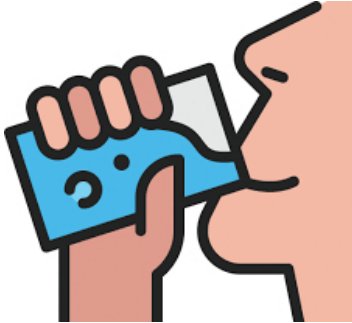


Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Electrical power



Drinking water



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of out-

Safety



Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

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24/7



In this Aug. 26, 2019 file photo, a municipal biologist examines a mosquito in Salt Lake City.

Associated Press

EEE, West Nile, malaria: Know the difference between these mosquito-borne diseases

By The Associated Press

The world's deadliest animal can be squashed flat with a quick slap: It's the mosquito.

The buzzing insects are more than annoying they spread disease. When they bite and drink blood from a person or animal they can pick up viruses or germs too. If they can go on to bite someone or something else, they deposit the germ right under the skin.

People in some areas of Massachusetts have been warned to stay indoors when mosquitoes are most active after a rare case of eastern equine encephalitis was discovered. And Dr. Anthony Fauci, the former top U.S. infectious disease expert, was recently hospitalized after he came down with West Nile virus. □

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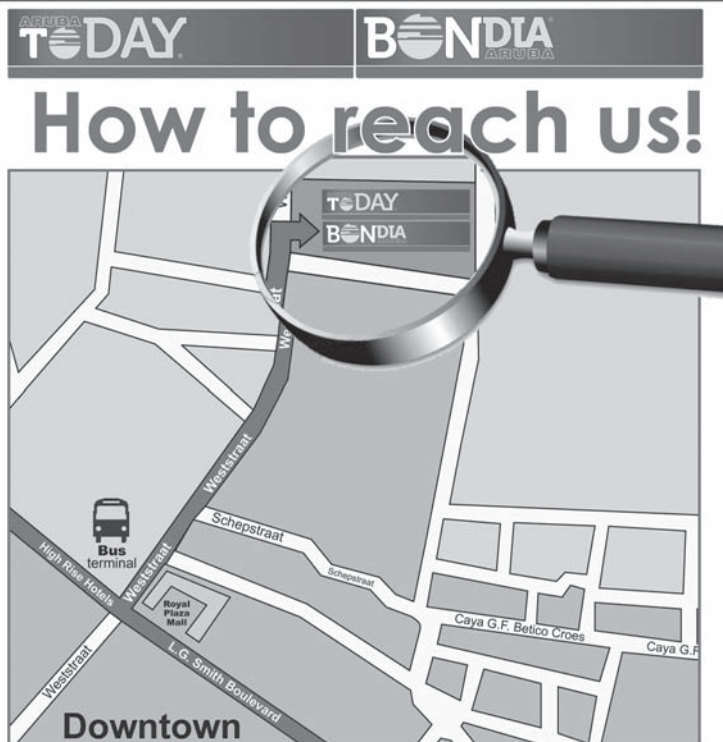
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Traveling over Labor Day weekend? Have a back-up plan for cancellations and delays, and be patient

By DAVID KOENIG
AP Business Writer

Many children have gone back to school in the U.S., and the days are getting shorter, but there is still one more excuse to use the swimsuits and beach towels before packing them up: Labor Day.

Airports, highways, beaches and theme parks are expected to be packed for the long holiday weekend as a lot of Americans mark the unofficial end of summer the same way they celebrated the season's unofficial start: by traveling. The Transportation Security Administration anticipates screening more than 17 million people between Thursday and next Wednesday a record for the Labor Day period.

AAA says bookings for domestic travel are running 9% higher than last year for the holiday weekend, while international trips are down 4%.

American Airlines plans to have its largest Labor Day weekend operation ever and expects a 14% increase in passengers compared to last year.

If you are traveling to get a last blast of summer, here is a rundown of what you need to know.

Why Labor Day?

"Not everyone travels for Labor Day, not compared to July 4th or Thanksgiving those are the most popular ones," says Aixa Diaz, a spokesperson for AAA. "But certainly Labor Day offers people a way to get away for a final weekend of the summer. You've got people who are either taking the three-day weekend or perhaps taking off the whole week before Labor Day."

What are prices like?

Motorists are getting a break on gasoline compared with last year. The nationwide average was recently \$3.44 per gallon, compared to \$3.86 a year ago, according to AAA.

For electric vehicles, the average price for a kilowatt of power at an L2 commercial charging station is about 34



Vehicles move slowly in south-bound lanes, left, of Interstate Route 93, in Boston, on July 3, 2024. Associated Press

cents. The average is under 25 cents in Kansas and Missouri but tops 40 cents in several states, including New Hampshire, Tennessee and Kentucky. Hawaii is the costliest, at 56 cents.

Average airfares in July were down 7.1% from June and 2.8% from July 2023, according to the government's consumer price index. The trend appears to be accelerating as the peak summer-vacation season comes to an end.

"Now we're falling into that traditional fall season when demand slumps, and you're also seeing that in airfares," said Steve Hafner, CEO of the travel metasearch site Kayak. "Airfares are down from the summer about 26% already, and they're down even from the previous fall, about 4%." When is the best time to hit the road?

If you plan to start your drive on the Thursday or Friday before Labor Day, you will be sharing the road with commuters. You might want to leave before morning rush hour or even in the evening to avoid jams.

Transportation-data provider INRIX says the worst time to travel by car on Thursday will be between 1 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., and on Friday between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. That flips on Sat-

urday, when you'll want to avoid driving between 8 a.m. and 11 a.m.

For the return trip, pretty much all day Monday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. will be a slog, according to INRIX.

And watch out for risky drivers. New data from Arity, part of insurance giant Allstate, indicates that speeding over 80 mph is up 83% and "very high speeding" faster than 100 mph is up more than 50%.

In a surprising twist, however, Arity says distracted driving has dropped on the last three Labor Days. When will airports be busiest?

Friday, according to the TSA. The agency expects to screen 2.86 million people that day. While an impressive number, it would not even rank in the top 15 days in TSA's history. The single-day record of 3.01 million was set on July 7, the Sunday after Independence Day.

TSA says it has enough screeners to keep the time it takes to get through regular lines to 30 minutes or less and to no more than 10 minutes for PreCheck lines. American Airlines says Thursday and Friday will be its busiest days, with 6,400 flights per day, followed by Labor Day itself, when the carrier has 6,300 scheduled

flights.

What should I do if my flight is delayed or canceled?

First, check your itinerary before leaving for the airport. It's better to be stuck at home than stranded at the airport.

If your flight is canceled, the airline might automatically rebook you. That might not be the best option.

"Get on the phone (to the airline's help center), get in front of an agent, reach out to the airline via social media if you have to, but find out what the other options are," says Julian Kheel, the founder and CEO of Points Path, a browser extension that lets users compare fares with deals available using frequent-flyer points. "You can almost always find another option that may work better than the one offered by the airline." Kheel said agents at the airport have more leeway to help, but they might be inundated if there are many canceled flights. DIY rebooking on the airline website or app might be faster, he said.

Phone tip: Some experts say if the airline has international help numbers, call one of those to get through more quickly than on the U.S. line.

What about refunds and reimbursement?

Airlines are required to provide refunds including for extra fees paid to passengers whose flights are canceled for any reason. However, they are not required to pay cash compensation, and no major U.S. airlines do. Only Alaska, Southwest and JetBlue even promise travel vouchers if the cancellation is their fault.

If you're stuck overnight, ask the airline about covering the costs of a hotel, meals and ground transportation. All major U.S. airlines except Frontier promise to help with all three for "controllable" disruptions, according to the Transportation Department's airline-policy dashboard. However, those commitments don't apply to cancellations caused by weather.

Keep receipts for all out-of-pocket expenses in case you can file a claim later.

A few final tips

Leave early. Everything will take longer than you expect, including getting through airport security. If you plan to park at the airport, make sure there will be spaces available when you arrive many airports now post that information online.

Watch the weather. Even if skies are clear at home, there could be storms at your flight's destination or along your road route. Have a backup route.

Be nice. Flight cancellations and bumper-to-bumper traffic are frustrating, but you won't be the only one who is stuck. Customer-service agents are busy during peak travel periods, so it's important to be patient and respectful while they try to help you. □



U.S. Open 2024: Coco Gauff, Olympic gold medalist Zheng win their first-round matches

By BRIAN MAHONEY

AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Coco Gauff had an easy start to her U.S. Open title defense, rolling to a 6-2, 6-0 victory over Varvara Gracheva on Monday.

Gauff needed just over an hour, looking more like the player who won her first major title last year at age 19 than the one who had dropped her last two matches before coming to New York.

Zheng Qinwen, the Olympic gold medalist in women's tennis, stayed in the tournament by rallying for a 4-6, 6-4, 6-2 victory over Amanda Anisimova.

Zheng began the Grand Slam season by reaching the final of the Australian Open. She had a difficult assignment to start the year's final major in Anisimova, an American who earlier this month reached the final of a hard-court warmup tournament in Montreal and returned to the top 50 of the



Coco Gauff, of the United States, reacts after defeating Varvara Gracheva, of France, during the first round of the U.S. Open tennis championships, Monday, Aug. 26, 2024, in New York.

Associated Press

WTA rankings.

But the No. 7 seed from China solved Anisimova's power as the match went on to move into the second round as she turns her at-

tention back to the Grand Slams after becoming China's first singles gold medalist at the Paris Olympics.

"You have the first one, of course you're going to stay

a long time in the successful feeling. I did that in the Australian Open but I was just in the final, and the effect takes me so long to come back to reality,"

Zheng said.

"I had this experience already, so this time when I had success in the Olympic Games, to come to the next tournament, I say, everything starts at zero. You are not anymore the Olympic champion. Just be humble and try to work, fight every single match, because if you don't fight, you have a big chance to lose."

Maria Sakkari, the No. 9 seed from Greece, became the first seeded player to be eliminated when she stopped playing after losing the first set against China's Wang Yafan. Sakkari, who also lost in the first round last year at Flushing Meadows, received treatment on her shoulder in the first set.

Men's winners Monday included No. 4 Alexander Zverev, No. 6 Andrey Rublev, No. 8 Casper Ruud, and Americans Taylor Fritz and Ben Shelton, the Nos. 12 and 13 seeds. □

Double-duty Danny Jansen plays for both teams in one MLB game. Here's how

By JIMMY GOLEN

AP Sports Writer

BOSTON (AP) — Blue Jays-turned-Red Sox catcher Danny Jansen didn't just play for both teams in the same game a first in major league baseball history.

He played for both teams in the same inning.

Jansen became the first major leaguer ever to appear on both sides of a baseball box score when he took the field for Boston on Monday in the resumption of a rain-delayed game he started for Toronto in June before he was traded to the Red Sox.

"Pinch-hitting for Danny Jansen: Dalton Varsho," Red Sox media relations coordinator Daveson Perez announced in the press box before the first pitch on Monday afternoon, which came 65 days, 18 hours and 35 minutes after the game was suspended

by rain. "Defensive changes: Danny Jansen now at catcher."

Playing for Toronto on June 26, Jansen fouled off the only pitch he saw from Kutter Crawford in the second inning before the tarps were called out. On July 27, Jansen was traded from Toronto to Boston for three minor leaguers.

With Jansen behind the plate on Monday, Nick Pivetta struck Varsho out to complete the at-bat Jansen started. Then Jansen came up for Boston with two outs in the bottom half, getting a nice cheer from a sparse makeup game crowd, and hit a lazy liner to first base to end the inning.

An authenticator was on hand to tag all of Jansen's equipment, and the Baseball Hall of Fame said it requested the scorecard from official scorer Bob El-

lis. Ellis was also working the game when it started in June.

"This scorecard will be a great tool to document and illustrate this history, showing Danny Jansen's name on both teams," Hall spokesman John Shestakofsky said.

When the ballpark opened to fans, the scoreboards were showing Jansen at bat for the Blue Jays — complete with a picture of him in his Toronto cap. Before the first pitch, the umpires held an extended conversation at home with the coaches who brought out some of the weirdest lineup cards in baseball history.

Red Sox manager Alex Cora embraced the quirkiness of the occasion, putting Jansen in the lineup for the makeup game instead of the regularly scheduled night game, saying, "Let's

make history." (As the backup, Jansen's primary job is to keep No. 1 catcher Connor Wong from overwork.)

Jansen said he was surprised it had never happened before in the sport's

century and a half of history but also embraced his spot in baseball lore.

"Any time you can be a part of this great game's history," he said, "it's pretty unique." □



Boston Red Sox catcher Danny Jansen, left, tries to throw out a runner on a steal attempt as Toronto Blue Jays Daulton Varsho, who pinch-hit for Jansen, strikes out during the resumption of the second inning of a baseball game which was delayed due to rain in June, against the Toronto Blue Jays at Fenway Park, Monday, Aug. 26, 2024, in Boston.

Associated Press

It took 7 decades but the Wood Brothers finally have NASCAR win No. 100

By JENNA FRYER

AP Auto Racing Writer

Speedy Thompson was the first driver to wheel the famed No. 21 Ford to victory lane for Wood Brothers Racing way back in 1960 with a win at Charlotte Motor Speedway.

Ninety-eight wins followed over the next seven decades, all the way through Ryan Blaney's victory at Pocono Raceway in 2017. And then one of NASCAR's pioneering teams stalled.

Wood Brothers, despite a tight alliance with Team Penske and strong support from Ford Motor Co., sat on 99 wins for more than six years. The drought finally ended over the weekend when Harrison Burton gave the organization win No. 100 with a victory the first of his Cup Series career in an upset thriller at Daytona International Speedway.

The win earned Burton one of the last remaining spots in the playoff field and finally gave team co-owners Eddie and Len Wood the victory their late father had long eyed. Glen Wood, a NASCAR Hall of Famer, founded the team in 1950 with his brothers Leonard, Ray Lee, Delano and Clay. The team to this day operates out of Stuart, Virginia, and is run by the second and third generations of the Wood family. Glen



Harrison Burton (21) crosses the finish line ahead of Kyle Busch (8) to win a NASCAR Cup Series auto race at Daytona International Speedway, Saturday, Aug. 24, 2024, in Daytona Beach, Fla.

Associated Press

Wood died in 2019 at the age of 93.

"There's nothing better than winning at Daytona," said Eddie Wood, who called the facility his favorite NASCAR track. "Winning here is bigger to me than winning somewhere else. It's just special. Our dad raced on the beach, actually on the sand. God, that was almost 75 years ago. I think he ran the first race he ever run on the sand in 1953. That's a long time ago. Winning Daytona is just really special for our family."

Wood Brothers and Ford

Burton's win was the 16th at Daytona for the No. 21,

which won five Daytona 500s and 11 more times in NASCAR's annual summer stop at the track. Burton is the 19th driver to win a Cup race for the family.

The single-car team was once one of the most dominant entries in the Cup garage until it hit lean years that only worsened with the 2008 recession. It took help from Ford he only manufacturer the team has ever partnered with to keep the doors open.

"There's so many things in a guy's life, everybody's life, one phone call, one place you happen to be at a certain time, timing is everything," Eddie Wood said.

"But there was a phone call from Edsel Ford back in 2008. We were really struggling. He said, 'I'm going to have a gentleman call you tomorrow that's going to help you.'

"That man's name was Jim Farley, who is now the CEO of Ford Motor Co. That's how far back things go. Our family raced Ford Motor Co. products since the beginning, 1950. I think that's one of the most things I'm really, really proud of."

The Ford assistance wasn't really enough to make Wood Brothers a contender again, and the turnaround still didn't happen after win No. 98, the Daytona 500 in 2011 with rookie Trevor Bayne.

Burton's victory Saturday night is just the fourth win for the No. 21 since 2000. Elliott Sadler won Bristol in 2001, Bayne won the Daytona 500 and Blaney at Pocono in 2017 in a win that was aided by Roger Penske's intervention.

Penske in 2014 needed a seat for Blaney and wanted to align with a team where he could develop young personnel. Wood Brothers, like Penske a heavy Ford team, was the perfect fit.

More challenges

When NASCAR introduced its charter system in 2016, Wood Brothers didn't get one despite being one of the oldest teams in Cup history. Without the charter, the No. 21 wasn't guaran-

teed a spot in the field each week and its percentage of the purse payouts was dramatically smaller than chartered teams.

Jon Wood, Eddie's son and a former driver, is now the team president and said not landing a charter was nearly rock bottom.

"When we didn't get a charter, and we were talking about it, it was the lowest point of lows," Jon Wood said. "We had to come here, face the music, and say, 'I think we'll be OK.' And we are. That's the part that's just so surreal in this. You go from the lowest of lows to just on top of it."

The team did not secure a full charter until 2021.

What's next

Burton, unfortunately, hasn't worked out for the organization the way Penske had hoped and the decision was made earlier this season to release the 23-year-old at the end of the year. The Penske drivers were among the many competitors who went to victory lane to congratulate Burton on his breakthrough victory.

"Obviously, the way the last three years have gone has not been the way I wanted to represent myself, the way I wanted to represent this team," Burton said. "And then to have the walls closing in on, you know, there's a definite end to my time to get to drive this historic car, and then to find a way to win while those walls are closing in, to me, is really, really special."

"It almost makes the last three years worth it, but I would've much rather won before now. It's just been so hard, and that's the way it should be. The Cup Series is really, really hard. But to get the Wood Brothers' 100th win, get my very first Cup win, it's just really, really hard to put in words."

Burton has 11 races remaining in the No. 21 and will be part of the 16-driver playoff field when it starts two weeks from now at Atlanta Motor Speedway. That's 11 weeks for Burton to make more history with a historic NASCAR team. □



Harrison Burton celebrates in Victory Lane after winning a NASCAR Cup Series auto race at Daytona International Speedway, Saturday, Aug. 24, 2024, in Daytona Beach, Fla.

Associated Press